

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:ALATHERTONJR:MAR

APPROVED BY S:LSEAGLEBURGER

NEA:ALA THERTONJR

S/S: MR. ORTIZ

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TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV NIACT IMMEDIATE

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NODIS

CHEROKEE, FOR AMBASSADOR FROM EAGLEBERGER

E.O. 11652: YDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, IS, US

SUBJECT: EXCHANGE OF NOTES WITH SOVIETS ON ALLEGED ISRAEL
BLOCKADE

REF: TEL AVIV 5681

1. THERE FOLLOW BELOW THE TEXT OF OUR REPLY TO SOVIET NOTE
AND OF ISRAELI PAPER GIVEN TO THE SECRETARY BY DINITZ
AUGUST 17 DESCRIBING THEIR RECENT NAVAL ACTIVITIES AND
REASONS FOR THEM IN SOME DETAIL. WE FULLY AGREE THAT WE
SHOULD NOT FLY BLIND ON THIS ISSUE, AND AS YOU WILL SEE,
OUR REPLY TO SOVIETS TAKES INTO ACCOUNT INFORMATION AND
ASSURANCES PROVIDED US BY ISRAELIS.

2. TEXT OF REPLY TO SOVIETS:

BEGIN QUOTE:

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A.

THE ALLEGATION THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS GIVEN ITS APPROVAL TO ACTIONS ALLEGEDLY TAKEN BY ISRAEL TO BLOCKADE THE LEBANESE COAST IS WITHOUT FOUNDATION, AND WE REJECT IT CATEGORICALLY. SUCH UNFOUNDED CHARGES CANNOT HELP OUR RELATIONSHIP.

B. WE HAVE RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT ISRAEL IS TAKING PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO PROTECT ITS OWN COAST AGAINST THE INCREASING THREATS OF INFILTRATION AND TERRORISM FROM THE SEA. CARE WILL BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT ITS ACTIONS STAY WITHIN THAT FRAMEWORK. END QUOTE.

3. TEXT OF ISRAELI PAPER:

BEGIN QUOTE:

(1) ISRAEL DOES NOT MAINTAIN A NAVAL BLOCKADE ALONG THE LEBANESE COAST.

(2) ISRAEL HAS FOUND ITSELF BOUND TO INCREASE THE SECURITY OF ITS COAST LINES IN LIGHT OF INCREASING SEABORNE TERRORIST ACTIVITY. THE ERECTION OF A SECURITY FENCE ON ISRAEL'S NORTHERN BORDER AND THE INCREASED EFFICIENCY OF THE IDF GUARDING IT HAVE MADE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE TERRORISTS TO INFILTRATE INTO ISRAEL THROUGH THE ISRAEL-LEBANESE BORDER. THEY HAVE THEREFORE ATTEMPTED TO USE ISRAEL'S COASTLINE FOR THEIR PURPOSES AND HAVE SPEEDED UP THE TRAINING OF MANPOWER AND TRIED TO CREATE AN OPERATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR COASTAL TERRORIST ACTIVITIES.

(3) DURING 1974 AND 1975 THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF TERRORIST ATTEMPTS USING BOATS AS THEIR METHOD OF TRANSPORTATION WHICH CLIMAXED IN THE MURDEROUS ATTACK ON THE SAVOY HOTEL IN THE NIGHT BETWEEN THE FIFTH AND SIXTH OF MARCH 1975. THIS OPERATION WAS CARRIED OUT FROM A LEBANESE COMMERCIAL VESSEL FROM WHICH THE TERRORISTS LANDED ON THE COAST IN RUBBER BOATS. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT THE ATTACK ON THE SAVOY HOTEL RESULTED IN ELEVEN KILLED AND TEN WOUNDED. (SEE SEPARATE LIST OF OTHER SEA-BORNE TERRORIST ATTEMPTS.)

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(4) DURING THE CURRENT YEAR, AN INCREASED NUMBER OF INTELLIGENCE REPORTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED SHOWING THAT THE TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS ARE STILL PLANNING TO CARRY OUT SEABORNE TERRORIST ATTACKS AGAINST ISRAEL. IN THIS RESPECT WE HAVE REPORTS THAT A NUMBER OF UNITS HAVE BEEN TRAINED SPECIFICALLY FOR SUCH TASKS. THE TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ALSO CONTINUED TO DEVELOP THEIR OPERATIONAL CAPABIL-

ITIES AND HAVE IN THEIR POSSESSION SUITABLE VESSELS.

(5) REPORTS ALSO SHOW THAT THE TERRORISTS ARE BEING TRAINED TO INFILTRATE WEAPONS INTO THE GAZA STRIP BY SEA. THESE WEAPONS ARE DESTINED FOR OPERATION INSIDE ISRAEL.

(6) IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THAT WE HAVE INCREASED OUR COASTAL SECURITY AND CARRY OUT SEARCHES IN SUSPECT BOATS WHICH VIOLATE ISRAEL'S TERRITORIAL WATERS. AFTER THE ENTEBBE OPERATION OUR APPREHENSIONS IN THIS RESPECT HAVE PARTICULARLY GROWN.

THE FOLLOWING ARE DETAILS OF THOSE VESSELS WHICH HAVE BEEN SEARCHED BY THE ISRAEL NAVY:

(A) ON JULY FIRST AN S.O.S. SIGNAL FROM A VESSEL IN THE RAS EL NAKURA AREA WAS RECEIVED. AN ISRAEL NAVAL VESSEL FOUND A GREEK FREIGHTER CALLED "FRIENDSHIP 1" WHICH WAS ON ITS WAY TO TYRE CARRYING A LOAD OF WEAPONS AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES. THE CREW OF THIS BOAT CONSISTED OF NINE MEN, INCLUDING FOUR PALESTINIANS. THE ARMS WERE CONFISCATED AND THE BOAT WAS RELEASED ON THE FOURTH OF JULY 1976.

(B) ON THE SIXTH OF JULY AN ISRAEL NAVAL VESSEL STOPPED THE LEBANESE FREIGHTER "ABDUL BAST" WHICH WAS ON ITS WAY FROM ALEXANDRIA TO TYRE. THE VESSEL WAS TWELVE MILES WEST OF ACRE. AFTER AN INTERROGATION OF THE CREW THE VESSEL WAS RELEASED ON THE SPOT.

(C) ON THE EIGHTH OF JULY THE GREEK FREIGHTER "COSTAS" WAS STOPPED. THE VESSEL WAS ON ITS WAY FROM LARNAKA TO TYRE. THE VESSEL WAS STOPPED FOUR MILES NORTHWEST OF RAS EL NAKURA. THE FREIGHTER CARRIED 280 TONS OF FLOUR FOR
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THE IRC. AFTER SEARCH AND IDENTIFICATION THE VESSEL AND ITS CREW WERE RELEASED.

(D) ON AUGUST FIRST THE LEBANESE FREIGHTER "ABDUL BASIS" ON ITS WAY FROM ALEXANDRIA TO TYRE WAS STOPPED NORTHWEST OF HAIFA. ON BOARD WERE OVER 80 PASSENGERS AND A LOAD OF FOODSTUFFS. SINCE THERE WERE ON BOARD PALESTINIANS AND MEMBERS OF THE PLO, THE VESSEL WAS BROUGHT TO HAIFA. THE BOAT AND THE PASSENGERS WERE RELEASED ON AUGUST THIRD 1976.

(E) ON AUGUST THIRD THE CYPRUS FREIGHTER "HERMES" WAS STOPPED NINE MILES WEST OF NAHARIYA. IT WAS ON ITS WAY FROM LIMASOL TO SIDON. ON BOARD WERE FORTY-FIVE PASSENGERS AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES. AMONG THE PASSENGERS THERE WERE TWO PALESTINIANS WHO WERE BROUGHT TO HAIFA FOR

FURTHER INTERROGATION.

(F) ON AUGUST SIXTH THE TURKISH FREIGHTER "KEFA ROCKEN (?)" WHICH WAS ON ITS WAY FROM TYRE TO ALEXANDRIA WAS STOPPED TWELVE MILES WEST OF RAS EL NAKURA. ON BOARD THERE WERE ABOUT 300 PASSENGERS AND A LOAD OF PRIVATE CARS. AFTER IDENTIFICATION AND INTERROGATION THE BOAT WAS RELEASED ON THE SPOT.

(7) AS FAR AS USE OF SOVIET WEAPONS BY TERRORIST GROUPS IS CONCERNED, IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN AT LEAST TWO ATTEMPTED ATTACKS ON EL AL PLANES BY TERRORISTS ARMED WITH SOVIET ROCKETS. THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE SOVIETS KNOW TO WHOM THEY SUPPLY WEAPONS OF THIS SORT.

(8) IT IS CERTAINLY KNOWN THAT THE USSR IS AT PRESENT SUPPLYING THE TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS IN LEBANON WEAPONS THROUGH IRAQ WHICH FLIES THE EQUIPMENT TO EGYPT FROM WHERE IT IS TRANSFERRED WITH EGYPTIAN HELP TO THE TERRORISTS IN LEBANON.

OTHER SEABORNE TERRORIST ATTEMPTS

(1) ON THE NIGHT OF THE 24TH TO THE 25TH OF JUNE 1974, A TERRORIST ATTACK WAS CARRIED OUT ON NAHARIYA. THE
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TERRORISTS CAME FROM LEBANON THROUGH THE SEA. IN THIS ATTACK FOUR PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND SEVEN WOUNDED.

(2) ALREADY IN THIS ATTACK THE TERRORISTS DEMONSTRATED CAPABILITIES TO USE THE SEA LANES. THEY LANDED ON THE COAST IN A MOTOR BOAT OF ZODIAK TYPE AND IN THEIR POSSESSION THERE WAS OTHER MARITIME EQUIPMENT.

(3) FURTHER SEA-BORNE ATTACKS WERE FOILED.

(A) AUGUST NINE, 1974, A RUBBER BOAT BELONGING TO A TERRORIST GROUP WAS DESTROYED WHILST ON ITS WAY TO AN ATTACK IN ISRAEL.

(B) OCTOBER 25, 1974, TWO TERRORISTS INFILTRATED THROUGH THE SEA IN THE RAS EL NAKURA SECTION. 4 DECEMBER 1974 FOUR TERRORISTS ARRIVED THROUGH THE SEA IN THE RAS EL NAKURA SECTION WITH THE AIM OF ATTACKING IN NAHARIYA.
END QUOTE.

ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DEMARCHE, NAVAL FORCES, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, DIPLOMATIC NOTES, MILITARY PLANS, POLITICAL SITUATION, CAT-C, CHEROKEE 08/20/76
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE207647
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ALATHERTONJR:MAR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P840123-0256, N760006-0392
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760833/aaaabcde.tel
Line Count: 222
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, ONLY
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, ONLY
Reference: 76 TEL AVIV 5681
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <07 OCT 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EXCHANGE OF NOTES WITH SOVIETS ON ALLEGED ISRAEL BLOCKADE
TAGS: PFOR, PREL, MASS, IS, US, UR, LE, (KISSINGER, HENRY A), (DINITZ, SIMCHA),
To: TEL AVIV
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006